



Benefits

- Reduce sheet and rill erosion.
- Reduce transport of sediment and other water-borne contaminants downslope, on site, or off site.
- Enhance wildlife habitat.

Guidelines

Location

- Most suitable on cropland fields with uniform slopes ranging from 4 to 8 percent.

Width

- Minimum width for permanent vegetative strips is 15 feet.
- Minimum width for pure legume strips is 30 feet.
- Minimum width for the lowest downslope vegetative strip is twice the width of the in-field vegetative strips.
- Maximum Crop Widths

Slope (%)	Crop Width (ft.)*	Crop Width (ft.)*
1-5	150	1/2 actual slope length
6-8	100	1/2 actual slope length
9-12	60	1/2 actual slope length
13-16	40	1/2 actual slope length
*Maximum crop width is lesser of column 2 or 3.		

Vegetation

- Species should be adapted to the climate and soil conditions of the site.
- High density of vegetation is required for proper functioning of the contour buffer strip.
- Seeding Rates

Tall Fescue (KY31)**	50 lbs./ac.	Aug. 15-Oct. 1 Feb. 20-April 1
Reed Canarygrass*	25 lbs./ac.	Aug. 15-Oct. 1 Feb. 20-April 1
White Clover	5 lbs./ac.	Aug. 15-Oct. 1 Feb. 20 - April 1
Sericea Lespedeza*	40 lbs./ac.	Apr. 1-June 1
Kobe or Korean Lespedeza	40 lbs./ac.	Mar. 15-Apr. 15
Common Bermudagrass*	Seed 10 lbs./ac. or Sprigs 30 bu./ac.	May 10-July 1
Switchgrass***	15 lbs./ac.	Dec. 1-July 1
* High tolerance of sedimentation. May become invasive. ** Moderate tolerance of sedimentation. ***High tolerance of sedimentation. Benefits wildlife nesting cover and restoration of native plant community.		

- White clover and Kobe and Korean Lespedeza are good wildlife food plants. Sericea lespedeza and switchgrass provide good cover for wildlife.

Establishment

- Lime and fertilize according to soil test recommendations.
- Use a cultipacker seeder, a no-till drill, grain drill with press wheels, or broadcast and cultipack before and after seeding.
- For quick vegetative establishment, seed 1/2 bushel of cereal rye or wheat or 5 pounds of foxtail millet per acre with the above seeding rates.
- **Temporary cover** can be used as mulch for establishment of perennial vegetation.

Contour Buffer Strips

- **Summer annuals** followed by establishment of perennial vegetation in the fall.

foxtail millet	20 lbs./ac.	May 1-July 1
pearl millet	20 lbs./ac.	May 1-July 15
sudangrass	45 lbs./ac.	Apr. 20-July 1

- **Winter annuals** followed by establishment of perennial vegetation in the spring.

cereal rye	3 bu./ac.	Sept. 15-Nov. 10
winter wheat	3 bu./ac.	Aug. 15-Nov. 1

Maintenance Items

- Fertilize buffer strips when fertilizing crops or as needed to maintain stand density.
- Minimize vehicular traffic.
- Smooth out sediment accumulation.

- Re-seed and/or re-fertilize damaged areas during the next recommended seeding date period.
- When necessary, renovate by re-establishing new buffer strips adjacent to old strip to maintain proper spacing.
- Maintain minimum height 8 inches for switchgrass and 4 inches for all other vegetation.
- To protect ground nesting birds, avoid mowing before August 15.

Complementary Practices

Grassed Waterway
Grade Stabilization Structure
Terrace System
Water and Sediment Control Basin

CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS – SPECIFICATIONS SHEET

Landowner _____ Field Number _____

Purpose (Check all that Apply)

☐ Reduce Sheet and Rill Erosion

☐ Provide Wildlife Habitat

☐ Reduce Pollution from Runoff

☐ Other (Specify)

Location and Layout	Strip 1	Strip 2	Strip 3	Strip 4
Cultivated Width (ft.)				
Buffer Strip Width (ft.)				
Buffer Strip Length (ft.)				
Acres in Buffer Strip				

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